



**City of Lake Forest Park
City Council Communications Committee
Monday, May 23, 2016
4:30 p.m.
Lake Forest Park City Hall
Lake Forest Room
17425 Ballinger Way NE
PROPOSED AGENDA**

Committee Members: **Phillippa Kassover, Chair; Mark Phillips, Tom French**

4:30 p.m.

**Call to Order
Adoption of Agenda
Adoption of Meeting Notes – April 25, 2016**

Committee Discussion Topics

1. *Review Town Hall Event on May 5, 2016*
 - a. What worked?
 - b. Lessons learned?
 - c. Schedule and methods for sharing citizen feedback with Council
2. *Review Draft Communications Plan*
 - a. Are the guiding principles, target audiences, goals and strategies right for Lake Forest Park?
 - b. Social Media – discussion and recommendations
 - c. Newsflashes and News Releases, what is the difference and when are news releases appropriate?
 - d. Talking Points – when are these recommended and who prepares?
3. *Next Town Hall*
 - a. Schedule and topic?
4. *Public Engagement*
 - a. Useful document from International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) for review and future discussion

6:00 p.m.

Adjourn

DRAFT

**Council Communications Committee Notes
Lake Forest Room
April 25, 2016**

Councilmembers Present: Catherine Stanford, Deputy Mayor; Mark Phillips, Councilmember; Phillippa Kassover, Councilmember; Tom French, Councilmember

Councilmembers Absent: None

Staff Present: JoAnne Trudel, Deputy City Clerk

Visitors: 2

Deputy Mayor Stanford called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

The agenda was approved by general consensus.

Outline for May 5, 2016 Town Hall Meeting / Strategic Plan Outreach/Information

Members reviewed a proposed Town Hall communications plan prepared by Cmbr. Kassover, which included an outreach schedule, primary target audiences, agenda, and key messages. Discussion followed regarding preparation of a PowerPoint presentation, poster boards, and the engagement of participants in identifying support, or not, of items from the draft Strategic Plan such as ongoing services and items on the policy wish list.

Additional discussion included timing of newsflashes, preparation of an article for the *Shoreline Area News*, outreach to City boards/commissions/committees, ensuring adequate time for the Question & Answer period, and having a councilmember at each of the poster board stations to scribe citizen comments.

It was noted that, after the Town Hall, councilmembers could continue outreach about the draft Strategic Plan by making presentations at various community meetings.

Citywide Communications Plan

Cmbr. Kassover will forward a draft plan she has been working on to Cmbr. Phillips.

Deputy Mayor Stanford suggested a whole meeting be devoted to the discussion after the Town Hall is finished.

Membership and Governance Discussion

Deputy Mayor Stanford noted Cmbr. Kassover has expressed interest in being the chair of the committee. There was unanimous support for the proposal.

Deputy Mayor Stanford noted she will step back from the committee, given a chair has been appointed. Cmbr. French noted he is glad to fill in and help as needed, then excused himself from the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

DRAFT

Discussion returned to the subject of the Citywide Communications Plan, including meeting jointly with the staff-based Communications Committee and working on the plan jointly with the administration.

At this time, there was consensus of those present to approve as presented the notes from the March 21, 2016 meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

JoAnne Trudel
Deputy City Clerk

DRAFT

City of Lake Forest Park Draft Communications Plan

May 2016

Introduction

The City of Lake Forest Park recognizes the value of citizen involvement and the expertise and good information possessed by the citizens of Lake Forest Park. The City acknowledges the importance of including citizen concerns, ideas and values to help the City make better decisions. The City must identify, create and budget adequate resources to engage citizens and citizen groups to enable them to become an effective part of the City's decision making process.

Much of the City's overall success is shaped by the quality of its communication efforts. Therefore, a proactive approach is needed to foster effective two-way communication.

This Communications Plan is intended to document and provide a framework for the City's communications efforts.

Guiding Principles

Open, Two-Way Communication – Ensure that information is shared throughout the community and the city council and administration emphasizing two-way informational flow.

Community Problem Solving – Provide citizens with complete, accurate and timely information enabling them to arrive at informed conclusions. This will help the City to make the best decisions.

Proactive – The Plan gives the City the opportunity to tell its story rather than rely exclusively on others to interpret the City's actions, issues and decisions.

Decentralized – Strengthen direct communication between elected officials, City departments and citizens rather than trying to funnel all information through a central point of contact or department. This provides for more knowledgeable discourse, strengthens accountability and also makes it easier to access or provide information on City activities.

Inclusive – Including everyone in the process builds teamwork and a feeling of belonging, breaking down feelings of "us vs. them," which are common in many city governments and in many relationships of city government with citizens. The goal is to include everyone who cares to participate and to motivate to participate those who are not currently engaged.

Strong and Consistent Messages – A successful communications plan is built on strong themes and is more effective than one with unrelated and scattered messages. The

communications plan should support, reinforce and reflect the goals of the City government as established by the City Council, with the collaboration of the Mayor and the City administration. This underscores the idea of an organization with one common purpose: the health of our community and its citizens.

Target Audiences

Identifying and prioritizing target audiences are key components of a communications plan.

Primary Target Audiences

1. Citizens of Lake Forest Park

Citizens of Lake Forest Park are the highest priority target audience. Strengthening the relationship between City government and 13,000 residents is the starting point of a sound communications plan.

2. Members of City boards, commissions and committees

While these people are covered under the broad umbrella of item 1, above, Citizens of Lake Forest Park, the volunteer work they do on behalf of the community and government makes them a distinct and specific target audience.

3. City Employees

People employed by the City of Lake Forest Park are an integral part of the success of the communications plan. Each individual reflects the organization in his/her daily work.

4. Local News Media

While it is rare for regional broadcast or print media to cover news from our city, the media is important because its coverage of LFP City government can have significant influence on the image of government by the public. The most readily available media outlet is the hyper-local online *Shoreline Area News*, which does not have an active reporting staff, but will post news releases, photographs and stories submitted by the City.

Secondary Audiences

- Neighboring communities, including area residents who drive through, shop, work or visit in Lake Forest Park
- Other local governments in King and Snohomish Counties and beyond
- City government associations and organizations
- Elected state and federal officials
- Specialty online blogs and discussion forums, e.g. Seattle Transit Blog

Goals of the Communications Plan

- Ensure the Mayor and City Council are an active and integral part of the overall City Communications Plan.
- Identify procedures and policy for the City's effective and coordinated response to media inquiries and regular distribution of public information.
- Improve City communication to and from Lake Forest Park citizens, businesses and organizations.
- Improve two-way communication within the City organization.
- Enhance and improve community and media relations.
- Increase awareness, interest and participation of the citizens of Lake Forest Park in government goals and activities.
- Break down feelings of "us vs. them" between the City government and the residents of Lake Forest Park.
- Increase awareness, interest and participation of City employees in the goals and activities of the City.
- Build organizational pride among employees and positive identification with the City government as a whole.

Strategies and Actions

Strategies

- Employ a multimedia and multilevel communications approach, recognizing that what worked in the past may have outlived its usefulness and needs to be replaced. Utilize tools that serve people who absorb information audibly, as well as those who absorb information visually. Be sure the communications tools are diverse in order to reach various segments of the target audiences.
- Use interactive communications tools and techniques wherever and whenever possible to involve target audiences in the communications process and increase their commitment to the idea of community problem-solving.
- Identify an appropriate communications research program, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods to measure plan effectiveness, as well as attitudes and opinions of the citizens of Lake Forest Park.

Actions

- Communications Audit

It is useful to review the tools we have in place and our overall communications efforts in order to determine what more we could be doing. Consider using an outside firm or identifying local expertise to conduct a communications audit of the City's outreach tools to determine what is missing, what tools may be outdated and tools that need to be added.

- Communications Training

Provide communications counseling and training for City officials and staff. This tactic includes communications counseling/training with the Mayor, Council Members, City Administrator and Department Heads as well as staff fulfilling communications roles in the course of their job duties and members of City commissions, committees and boards. Training shall include procedures and policy for the City's effective and coordinated response to media inquiries and distribution of public information.

- Market Research

Conduct attitudinal surveys and focus groups. The method of implementation should include a diverse set of tools rather than just one form (random telephone surveys). The implementation must reach a broad spectrum of Lake Forest Park citizens so that the results accurately reflect the demographic profile of the community.

Current Communications Tools

External

City Newsletter

Description: Quarterly publication, four pages, direct mailed.

Objective: To provide general City information to the community.

Strengths: Reaches every household, easy to read, attractive format.

Weaknesses: Lacks timeliness and is reactive rather than proactive in scope.

Audience: All Lake Forest Park households.

Website

Description: Comprehensive website designed to enable designated staff to post information from a desktop computer. The site contains news items, department listings, calendar of City meetings and events, agendas and minutes for all Commissions, Committees and Council. It offers easy access to City programs, services, documents and more. Viewers can request automatic email or text notification of news items, agendas, calendar postings etc., when posted.

Recordings of City Council meetings are available on the website as follows:

- Regular business meetings are video streamed live and available to replay "on demand"

- Work Session meetings are audio streamed live and available to replay “on demand”

Objective: To provide "one-stop" access to City information via the World Wide Web. Cross reference information so that it is accessible from a variety of entry points.

Strengths: Flexible and easy to read with a powerful search tool. Easy to keep current and to add or delete information.

Weaknesses: Unable to provide on-line services such as permits, licenses etc. This will occur once the City has a web interface with its accounting software and permitting software. Is only available to citizens with Internet access.

Audience: Anyone with access to the Internet.

Social Media (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

Website Survey Tool – RESEARCHING WHETHER WE HAVE THIS CAPABILITY ON OUR WEBSITE

Description: Simple surveys or questionnaires can be posted from the backend. Persons who have completed the survey can view results. Participation is limited to one entry per computer.

Objective: To provide citizens with a means of commenting and providing input on City issues from their desktop.

Strengths: Extremely flexible.

Weaknesses: Only available to citizens with Internet access.

Audience: Anyone with access to the Internet.

Video/TV

Description: The City has government access channel 21, LFPTV. The current content list and associated update schedule for LFPTV is shown below:

Format	Looped Content	Updated
PPT	Council monthly mtg. schedule	Monthly
PPT	Council agenda recaps	2x/month
Video	Most recent Council regular business meeting	2x/month
PPT	Combined Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Channel 21 – Contact Info• City Hall• City Governance• Mayor; Councilmembers• Speaking at Council meetings• City Council Committees• City Council Goals 2014	<i>Bimonthly, or more often as needed</i>
Video	Lyon Creek time lapse video	
Video	Meet the LFP Police Department	
Video	“We the people” jury duty service	
Video	Police Dept. – Safety Tips	
Video	Planning & Building – Tree Permit	

Objective: Use public access television to provide information about City issues to the community.

Strengths: Reliable and knowledgeable staff, who are always willing to help and to improve coverage.

Weaknesses: Program scheduling is confusing. Difficult to determine what time City programs will air. Television viewers tend to "surf" channels and land on the public access channels by chance.

Audience: Customers of Comcast and CenturyLink residing within the city limits.

Brochures and Assorted Printed Materials

Description: A variety of informational brochures and assorted printed materials are created in-house to help provide guidance to residents and other customers on conducting business with the City. General functional areas include: (INFO BEING GATHERED BY STAFF). These are placed in display racks at City Hall. They are mailed in response to inquiries and used as a resource by front-line staff.

Objective: To provide brief, easy-to-understand information about City services and programs.

Strengths: Inexpensive, simple, easy to create.

Weaknesses: Limited distribution.

Audience: Lake Forest Park residents and other customers doing business with the City.

News Releases (COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEM)

Descriptions: News releases are prepared news or publicity items about City of Lake Forest Park business. Releases should be timely and relevant and contain the facts of the information. The release should include basic information: who, what, where, when, why and how. Wherever possible, a photograph should be included to draw the visual interest of the reader.

A news release is generally longer and more detailed than a newsflash. It is targeted for release by a media outlet.

Objectives: To provide the local media timely, accurate, and useful news about the City of Lake Forest Park. Releases are emailed to the local media.

Strengths: Easy to write and distribute.

Weakness: Not always "picked-up" and used by the media.

Audience: Local media.

Newsflashes (COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEM)

Description: A newsflash is also a prepared news or publicity item about City of Lake Forest Park business. As with new releases, newsflashes should be timely and relevant and contain the facts of the information: who, what, where, when, why and how. Wherever possible, a photograph should be included to draw the visual interest and attention of the reader.

A newsflash is briefer than a news release, and is targeted for immediate posting on the City's website.

Objective: To call attention to City programs, accomplishments, and upcoming public meetings.

Strengths: Easy to read, write and distribute.

Weaknesses: Not available to citizens without Internet access.

Audience: Anyone with Internet access.

Public Meetings

Description: In addition to the regularly scheduled Council and assorted Committees and Commission meetings, which are always open for public comment, other public meetings targeted towards specific issues are also held as needed: town halls, ballot measures, subarea plans, major projects, etc.

Objective: To present the community with an opportunity to express opinions and give input on specific City issues.

Strengths: Attendees hear the opinions of others and have a greater appreciation for the issue as a whole beyond their own personal opinions.

Weaknesses: Often attracts the same people again and again.

Audience: Either broad-base citizenry, or specific targeted group.

Internal

All Users E-mail

Description: Each City employee receives E-mail directed to "all users". E-mails include news releases, Council agendas, minutes, training opportunities etc.

Objective: Ensure that employees hear news from the organization before reading it in the papers or hearing it "on the street."

Strengths: Quick and timely information.

Weaknesses: Not all employees check their e-mail on a regular basis and not all employees have an individual computer (e.g. shared computers at the Public Works shop).

Audience: Employees

Leadership Team Meetings

Description: Directors of the various departments gather each week to review upcoming Council meetings, action items and to keep each other informed of issues in their own departments. The meetings provide an opportunity for department heads to keep abreast of what is happening in all departments not just their own.

Objective: Ensure that all departments are familiar with broad issues related to City business.

Strengths: Regular face-to-face contact between department heads.

Weaknesses: Information is not always communicated to department staff.

Audience: Department Heads.

Department Meetings

Descriptions: Each department meets regularly to exchange information and to update each other on issues and activities within the department and other departments.

Objective: Share information with all department employees about department business and citywide business.

Strengths: Provides an opportunity for employees to "catch up" and "check in" with each other.

Weaknesses: Because of busy schedules and conflicting meetings, department meetings are not always held on a regular basis.

Audience: Employees.

Talking Points (COMMITTEE DISCUSSION ITEM)

Description: Reference sheet provided to employees and Mayor and Council related to specific and often complicated issues. Talking Points generally contain the basics: who, what, where, when, why and how of an issue. They enable employees to become familiar with an issue quickly and respond factually to citizen questions.

Strength: Easy to read, easy to reference.

Weakness: None

Audience: Primarily front-line staff: both internal and field personnel.



International Association
for Public Participation

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

Increasing Level of Public Impact

Public participation goal

Inform

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Consult

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

Involve

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Collaborate

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

Empower

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

Promise to the public

We will keep you informed.

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.

We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

We will implement what you decide.

Example techniques

- Fact sheets
- Web sites
- Open houses

- Public comment
- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Public meetings

- Workshops
- Deliberative polling

- Citizen advisory committees
- Consensus-building
- Participatory decision-making

- Citizen juries
- Ballots
- Delegated decision